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Date 12-15-16

November 19, 1980

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Edmund S. Muskie *ESM*

1. Israel. Begin's Likud coalition government barely survived the no-confidence vote in the Israeli Knesset today, turning back the call for its resignation by a vote of 57-54 with two abstentions. This is the narrowest margin of support in the three and one-half years that Begin has been in power, and could portend further challenges. The vote was preceded by a strong emotional attack on the government's policies by Weizman, who declared that Israel was in a state of emergency, and a call by Dayan for early elections. Both men then voted against the government.

The handling of the economy is clearly one of the government's most vulnerable points, and the timing of any future challenges could hinge on economic indicators in the next months. There is also the continuing possibility that Finance Minister Hurwitz will resign, which would open the way for his four-member Rafi faction of the coalition to abstain in a future vote of no-confidence. In all, today's vote is a somber warning to Begin that unless he gets his economic house in order -- a very difficult task -- he may not be able to hold off the next election until November 1981. (C)

2. Korea. We are in continuing consultation with the Japanese who seem to be increasingly nervous as the prospect of a decision on Kim Dae Jung's fate gets nearer. I have asked Mike Mansfield to talk with Foreign Minister Ito to seek to determine the source of the gloomy Japanese assessment. Mike will also consult with the Japanese on the measures we each might take if Kim is executed.

We do not believe Chun has made a decision, or that the situation has materially changed. Most of the Japanese worries arose in the wake of our election, and I believe we

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are now getting the message through to Seoul that the Kim case is a bipartisan concern. Ambassador Gleysteen will be here next week but will return to Seoul before the critical date after consultations at the Department and with the transition team. I believe it will also be useful for him to return with a personal message from you to Chun. (S/S)

ok. Make
draft as
strong as
possible →

3. US-Greek Defense Negotiations. Two months ago we gave the Greek Government a proposed new defense agreement modeled after a 1977 agreement (which never entered into force) and the March 1980 US-Turkish agreement. Although we are basically satisfied with the present operating arrangements for U.S. military activities in Greece, we believe both countries would benefit from concluding as soon as possible a new agreement that would modernize and update current arrangements.

Greek reintegration into the NATO military structure removed a major Greek political obstacle to a new agreement, and the Greeks are now preparing a counter-draft. Once it is received, substantive negotiations can get under way. It is hard to predict how long the negotiations will take, but the Greeks want to conclude them before their general election, scheduled for next fall. (C)

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4. OAS General Assembly. Reaction to your OAS speech was very positive, not only among democratic representatives (who echoed the Barbadian Foreign Minister's remarks welcoming you), but also among representatives of authoritarian countries, who commented that you spoke for a "great cause" and who noted that you denounced terrorism as well as official repression.

As the General Assembly develops, the political focus will increasingly be on the Reports of the Human Rights Commission, particularly the Report on Argentina. The Argentines are still taking a very hard line, pressing for a resolution that does not identify their government by name. We will urge that the OAS must stand behind the Human Rights Commission. (C)

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